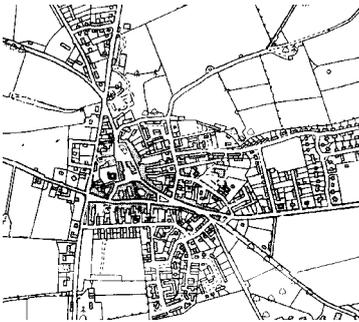


Stow-on-the-Wold Community Strategic Plan 2010-2015

Covering Stow-on-the-Wold, and
the surrounding parishes of
Bledington, Broadwell,
Condicote, Donnington, Icomb,
Longborough, Maugersbury,
Oddington and Swell



Stow Town Plan Group
January 2011

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1 Chairman's Statement

Welcome to the Stow on the Wold Community Strategic Plan

In this, the first Community Strategic Plan for Stow on the Wold, we profile our town, and identify the key challenges it faces. We then set out the long term vision for the town which guided the preparation of the Plan and the identification of the projects we hope to pursue with our partners over the next five years

Stow is a community that values its history, but at the same time, wants to move towards meeting the needs of a changing society. The Community Strategic Plan will support and encourage a community where people can lead active lives in the places where they live and work, with easy and safe access to a good range of shops and services, but which also cares for and serves the needs of the young, the elderly, the lonely and the housebound.

As part of its 'Big Society' agenda the Government published the Localism Bill on 13 December 2012. The Bill aims to shift power from central government back into the hands of individuals, communities and councils and gives local councils the right to shape their local areas through neighbourhood plans which will enable communities to permit development – in full or in outline – without the need for planning applications. It is vital therefore that, in Stow, we have a plan which has the backing of community to help to guide us when making these decisions.

Some of the projects we have identified can be implemented quickly and at a modest cost, while others may take some time to deliver and be more costly. The Town Council will 'champion' certain projects and provide support and encouragement for others. It will also check the Plan's progress to make sure that the local community is kept informed of progress and consulted on any major decisions.

I should also like to extend my sincere thanks to all those who have helped with the preparation of the plan.

Let's now put the plan into action.

Alun White
Chairman Stow Town Plan Group

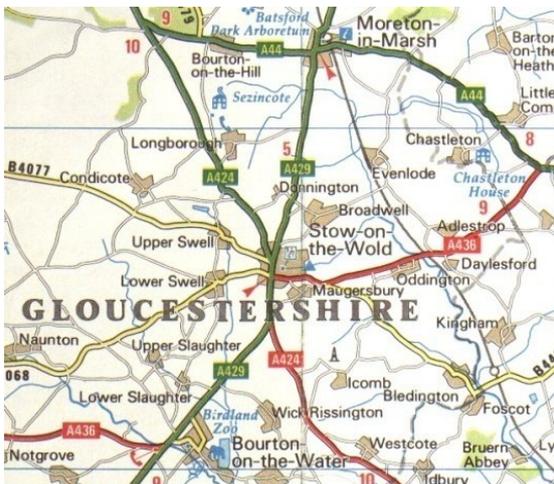
2 Summary of the Plan

- 2.1 Stow-on-the Wold is a beautiful ancient Cotswold wool town that has evolved over some 1000 years. It is loved and admired by everyone who lives in it and every year draws thousands of visitors from all over the world to enjoy its environment, architecture, and the shops, cafes, restaurants and pubs that make Stow so attractive.
- 2.2 This Community Plan seeks to build on and enhance Stow's attractiveness, not only for visitors but especially for all those who live in the town.
- 2.3 The 'vision' for Stow that the plan seeks to achieve is that:
- 'Stow will continue to be a working community that recognises the distinctiveness of the people that live, work in, or visit the area. The Plan aims to conserve Stow's beautiful, attractive environment and heritage whilst providing jobs, accessibility and activities for all'.*
- 2.4 To achieve this vision the plan sets out three goals:
- Goal 1: Maintain Stow as a premier shopping and tourist destination;
 - Goal 2: Ensure that Stow has appropriate community facilities and other services;
 - Goal 3: Ensure that Stow is an attractive place to live and work.
- 2.5 These goals are very much in line with Cotswold District Council's strategy for Stow.
- 2.6 Eighteen projects have been identified that should help to achieve these goals:
- 1: Maintain Stow's high quality historic environment
 - 2: Maintain and enhance Stow's tourist and shopping and service offer.
 - 3: Improve the approaches to the Town centre and the High Street
 - 4: Improve the environment of the Square
 - 5: Improve traffic management and parking arrangements
 - 6: Restore the town Well
 - 7: Improve public transport
 - 8: Develop a multi-sports activity centre/ leisure centre / community centre
 - 9: Set up a Rural Cinema
 - 10: Develop a New Library
 - 11: Develop a Town Museum
 - 12: Develop a New Medical Centre
 - 13: Provide high speed broadband to businesses and residents
 - 14: Provide additional affordable housing
 - 15: Develop a site outside the Town centre for small local workshops
 - 16: Develop a Design Statement for Stow
 - 17: Undertake a survey of Stow Battlefield
 - 18: Create a picnic area in the lower part of the Cricket Field.
- 2.7 Each of these projects requires a number of actions to be taken and more details of these actions may be found in the Plan.
- 2.8 Where projects are in the public sector, the relevant public sector body will take the lead. The Town Council will not be able to implement every project itself but will provide support and encouragement to those who do, monitor the Plan's implementation, influence future strategy and ensure that the local community's views are made known and that it is kept informed of progress.
- 2.9 Following the publication of the Plan the Town Council will continue to act as advisors to agencies and other groups implementing the Plan. We will meet quarterly with our partners in the District and County Council to:
- Assess the progress being made in delivering the projects;
 - Evaluate the outputs being achieved and, where necessary set new targets; and
 - Where necessary, review and abandon projects which are unlikely to succeed.
- 2.10 The Plan will be reviewed annually and presented at a public meeting in order to:
- Keep the resident and business community informed of the progress of the plan;
 - Engage the community in any decisions on the future direction of the plan;
 - Introduce new ideas and new people to the working group.

3 Profile of Stow-on-the-Wold

Location

- 3.1 Stow in the Wold, Gloucestershire, is located in the Cotswolds, 21 miles from Cheltenham, 32 miles from Oxford and 47 miles from Birmingham. The Tewkesbury junction of the M5 is 20 miles to the west and the M42 is 25 miles to the east. The nearest mainline railway station is Moreton in Marsh which is just over 4 miles away and Birmingham Airport is 45 miles away.
- 3.2 The Cotswolds stretch for 70 miles from Stratford-upon-Avon to Bath. The area is characterised by picturesque villages built of warm coloured limestone set in a stunning landscape.



History

- 3.3 Stow is an ancient Cotswold Wool Town. It sits on a hill at about 800 feet above sea level, originally the location of an Iron Age fort beside the Fosse Way, the Roman road running from Exeter to Lincoln. Originally called 'Stow St. Edward' or 'Edwardstow', after the town's patron saint, the town was founded as a planned market place by the Normans to take advantage of its unique position at the convergence of eight trackways.
- 3.4 The small settlement was controlled by the local abbey and, when the first weekly market was set up in 1107 by Henry I, he decreed that the proceeds should go to Evesham Abbey. This market continued for 800 years, only ceasing about 1900.
- 3.5 The main source of wealth in the Cotswolds was

wool and Stow grew to provide accommodation and other services for those visiting its fairs. Stow Fair was the largest in England and tradition says that during the fairs every house in the Square was turned into an alehouse. The character of the Fair changed as the importance of wool declined, and it became a horse fair, favoured by farmers, huntsmen, professional horse dealers and gypsies. It is now the 'gypsy horse fair', one of the biggest gatherings of its kind in England which attracts hundreds of sightseers to Stow twice a year.

- 3.6 In March 1646, the last important battle of the Civil War ended in the Square when the Parliamentary army under the command of Colonel Morgan overwhelmed Sir Jacob Astley's Royalist army.

Architecture

- 3.7 Buildings in Stow were built with the mellow Cotswold limestone from local quarries. Some have massive internal oak beams from the days when Gloucestershire was covered in forest. Many of the houses were built in the 16th century, but those built later have blended in to become part of the character of this beautiful town that has evolved over some 500 years. The historic core of the town is a Conservation Area with an extensive concentration of listed buildings.

Stow Today

- 3.8 Today Stow-on-the-Wold draws visitors from all over the world to see its stunning architecture, to shop in its many antique shops, to take afternoon tea in one of the old teashops and to get a feel for the ambience of this lovely old town. The large Market Square testifies to the town's former importance with the ancient market cross at one end and the town stocks at the other. Around the Square is an elegant array of Cotswold town houses and the many inns, restaurants and tea shops provide informal meeting spots for residents and visitors.
- 3.9 The town and the surrounding Parishes lie within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding National Beauty, a nationally designated protected landscape. Guidance on the special requirements

for the management of the particular character of this sensitive landscape is provided by the Cotswold Conservation Board. This is encapsulated in their current AONB Management Plan and in their Landscape Strategy and Guidelines. These documents may be viewed at www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/managementplan/index.html and www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/?page=LandscapeStrategyDocs respectively

The people

- 3.10 The number of Stow residents has remained fairly static at just over 2,000 for the last 10 years. In 2008 it was 2,134. Almost 75% of those living in the town have lived there for more than 5 years, while only 3% have lived there for less than a year.
- 3.11 14% of the population comprises children under 15 compared with 18% in England and this proportion is declining. 54% of the Stow population is aged 16-64 compared with 66% in England, and the percentage of the Stow population over 65 is 32%, compared with 16% in England.
- 3.12 The crime rate in is very low and neighbours are frequently willing to provide help when needed

The Town Centre retail and tourism

- 3.13 Stow has one of the largest town centres in the Cotswolds after Cirencester. It is a well known tourist destination, with a concentration of antique shops and galleries, cafés, tea shops, pubs restaurants and hotels, a Youth Hostel and a range of bed and breakfast and self catering establishments. It is an established 'base' for visitors to the north Cotswolds and there is little doubt that the tourist trade helps to maintain a good level of shops and services for local people.
- 3.14 Convenience retail provision is in line with the national average, the majority of companies being small independent businesses such as bakeries, a butcher, delicatessens, specialist wine merchant and a newsagent. The town centre also benefits from a Co-op Village Store. Outside the town centre there is a Tesco Supermarket which opens until midnight during the week, provides an internet shopping home delivery service and has a range of in-store services, including a delicatessen and fishmonger.
- 3.15 The town centre benefits from a range of other

services such as hair salons, banks and estate agents and the proportion of comparison units within the town is significantly above the national average, largely because of a high number of antique dealers and tourist focussed gift shops. Users of the town centre like its convenient location, its free parking and the choice of shops, as well as the attractive environment.

- 3.16 The number of national retailers in Stow is limited when compared to the larger towns in the district. However the individual nature of the shopping experience in Stow adds to its character, and contributes to the attraction of the centre as a tourist destination.
- 3.17 In February 2010, local estate agents estimated that there were 17 vacant units within the town, 20% of the total. This rate of vacancies may be partly attributable to the national economic recession but also to a decline of the antiques trade and the relatively high commercial rents.

The Local economy

- 3.18 While there is a significant amount of employment in the many small businesses in the town, especially related to tourism, there is no specific location for new industries or businesses.

Employment

- 3.19 c40% of those responding to the Stow Appraisal said that they were retired, 43% said they were employed and 1% said that they were unemployed. Of those in employment, 40% were employed in the retail/ service/ tourism sectors, 28% in real estate, construction and maintenance and 11% in local government. 38% were in managerial, professional and technical jobs, 20% in craft/ skilled manual jobs, 16% in sales and 11% in clerical/ secretarial jobs.
- 3.20 Stow households have median incomes of £30,158 and savings of £12,071.¹

Travel to work

- 3.21 Stow is one of the most self-contained settlements in Cotswold District, with more than 70% of the economically active population working at home, elsewhere in Stow, or within 10 miles of Stow.
- 3.22 The travel to work pattern of the resident population was:

¹2009 Housing Needs Survey - Cotswold District Council

- Worked at or from home 16%
- Travelled less than 2km 28%
- Travelled 2km to 10km 17%
- Travelled 10km to 30km 15%
- Travelled 30km to 40km 6%
- Over 40km 9%
- No fixed place of work 9%

3.23 The means of travel to work patterns of both the resident and daytime working populations were broadly similar showing an overwhelming dependence on personal transport.²

Means of travel to work

Means of travel	Resident	Daytime
Worked at or from home	16%	13%
By car or van	57%	64%
On foot	22%	17%
Other	5%	6%

3.24 This is hardly surprising given the limited availability of public transport. 87% of households had access to 1, 2 or 3 motor vehicles. According to the 2009 Housing Needs Survey carried out by Cotswold District Council only 10% of Stow households do not have a car.

Benefit

3.25 In August 2008 the following benefits were paid to Stow residents:

Benefit recipients

Benefit	No of recipients
Disability Living Allowance	75
Incapacity Benefit	50
Income Support	25
Job Seekers Allowance	5
Pension Credits	135
Housing Benefit	170

Education

3.26 The levels of qualification for the resident population aged 16 to 74 were given in the 2001 census as:

Qualifications

Qualifications	No	%
Total population aged 16-74	1434	
No qualifications	428	30

Less than 5 'O' Level/GCSE	239	17
More than 5 'O' Level/GCSE	316	22
2+ 'A' Levels	91	6
Degree level	263	18
Other Qualifications	97	7

Health

3.27 65% of Stow's 2,074 residents are considered to be in good health, 27% in fairly good health, with 8% saying their health was not good. 436 (21%) said they had limiting long term conditions (England average 18%). 180 people said they provided unpaid care, of whom 75% provided less than 20 hours a week

Housing

3.28 Stow is an attractive retirement destination and, as a consequence, is a high cost housing area, with average house prices in excess of £300,000. There was a limited supply of social housing but in recent years the supply has decreased as a result of the 'Right to buy' policy and the absence of new social housing being built. Private sector rents are on average £400 a month for a one bedroom property and £500 for a two bedroom property.

3.29 There is a case for additional affordable housing to help local people form households while maintaining their links with the local community. In the Town Appraisal carried out in 2002, 60% of respondents said that additional low cost housing should be built in Stow. Cotswold District Council's Housing Needs Survey 2009 and the Town Housing Needs Survey carried out by GRCC on behalf of Stow Town Council in 2010 confirms this. The latter shows that the turnover of Housing Association tenancies is low, that average market house prices are well beyond the means of local young people and that market rents are high in relation to local incomes. Both of these surveys indicate that there is a need for a small development of affordable housing, restricted to members of the local community, including those with strong links to Stow who have had to move away to find suitably priced accommodation.

Local Services

3.30 Stow has a reasonable range of local services. The Community Hospital which is due to be replaced by a new, purpose built, facility, is located some four miles from the town and there is a well

² Gloucestershire Unemployment Bulletin/ ONS Neighbourhood Statistics

regarded medical practice, dental surgeries and a pharmacy in the town.

- 3.31 Other facilities include a primary school, library with internet facilities, a Police Station and a Fire Station manned by retained firefighters.
- 3.32 Nevertheless, the town lacks some of the higher order facilities, such as a secondary school, hospital and community/ multi-use sports centre.

Traffic and parking

- 3.33 With its closely built structure, and narrow streets, Stow has traffic management and parking

problems. Many of its properties lack off road parking and pressure on road side parking is acute.

- 3.34 A significant number of commercial vehicles pass along the A429 Fosse Way to the west of the town centre. Advisory routing has been introduced within Gloucestershire to divert vehicles travelling between Evesham and Oxford away from the A44 through Bourton-on-the-Hill and Moreton-in-Marsh. This brings them onto the A429 through Stow to Northleach.
- 3.35 Stow is moderately well served by bus services, but lacks a railway station, the nearest stations being at Moreton-in-Marsh and Kingham, each about 4 miles away.

4 Cotswold District Council - Stow on the Wold Local Development Framework

4.1 The Cotswold District Council's Local Development Framework state that

4.2 *'Stow-on-the-Wold is a historic wool town located on the highest ground crossed by the Fosse Way. The present town has its origins in the medieval period - the town's conservation area reflects the quality of the old Cotswold stone buildings. Its position on the ridge top means that it is exposed to long views from all sides, particularly from the east and west. The town lies within the Cotswolds AONB.*

4.3 *Discussions with the Town Council highlighted the following as key issues for the town:*

- *Increased importance wanted for village design statements*
- *Inadequate parking provision in new developments for settlements like Stow where public transport cannot cater for all travel needs*
- *Staying tourists would be preferred*
- *Hospital and ambulance services – long distances to be covered*
- *Lack of secondary school means that young people don't have strong linkages with the town*
- *Ageing population, a high proportion of lone pensioner households*
- *Above average proportion of rented housing*
- *High proportion of second homes and vacant dwellings*
- *Pockets of deprivation: pensioners on fixed incomes, unemployment slightly higher than elsewhere in the District*
- *Local income level is generally low – service industry employment (90% tourism related employment) & fixed incomes (pensioners)*
- *Sports provision and leisure provision for children and young people is improving*
- *An increase in the takeaway outlets, likely to have a detrimental effect on the visual character of the town*
- *The town's economy has been declining, evidenced by an increased number of vacant shops in the town centre*

4.4 *Recently, the Stow Town Plan Group issued Stow-on-the-Wold Draft Community Strategic Plan 2010-2015, which includes three goals for the town:*

- *Goal 1: Maintain Stow as a premier shopping and tourist destination*
- *Goal 2: Ensure that Stow has appropriate community facilities and other services*
- *Goal 3: Ensure that Stow is an attractive place to live and work*

4.5 ***A number of projects have been identified to achieve each goal. The Cotswold District Core Strategy will support these goals, along with other projects that emerge from the evidence base and infrastructure planning process.'***

5 The key challenges we face

5.1 The Stow on the Wold Town Appraisal and the Business Appraisal identified three key challenges for the future of Stow. These are to:

- Secure Stow's future economy and preserve its environment;
- Ensure that the Town has appropriate community facilities;
- Ensure that the Town has an adequate supply of housing.

Securing Stow's future economy and preserving its environment

5.2 While there were concerns about the number of antique shops and tourist shops in the town, there was acknowledgement of the contribution that tourism makes to the Town's economy, and a desire to ensure that these benefits are retained and developed. It was also acknowledged that the high quality of Stow's environment has been a crucial factor in the Town's economic success. In order to sustain and grow Stow's economy, it was suggested that the environment of the Town centre, particularly the Square and its approaches could be enhanced. An overall traffic and parking policy should be developed to improve car and coach parking and also traffic circulation. The Town Well should be restored. The operation of Stow Fair should be better controlled, provision should be made to encourage new businesses to locate in the Town and that public transport should be improved to allow residents, particularly young people, to access jobs outside the town.

Community facilities

5.3 Although Stow appears to be well served with community facilities, there is a need to:

- Modernise and/or relocate the existing medical practice to enable a wider range of services to be provided;
- Create a new multi-use sports and community/leisure centre;
- Create a new library;
- Create a Town Museum

5.4 These facilities should be accessible to all visitors and residents particularly the young and elderly.

Housing

5.5 The high cost of housing in Stow makes it very difficult for young people and those on low incomes to get a foot on the housing ladder. This can mean that young people and those seeking accommodation close to family members living in Stow have to move away from the Town to obtain suitable accommodation which can lead to the breaking of important family ties.

5.6 There was also a suggestion that the maintenance of the Town's housing association housing stock might be improved.

6 The Vision for Stow-on-the-Wold

- 6.1 It is important that the Plan aspires to a long term vision for the Town since it is only by having such a vision that deficiencies may be identified, projects and actions planned and implemented and the effectiveness of the outcomes of the Plan assessed.
- 6.2 The Community Plan's vision for Stow is that:
'The Town will continue to be a working community that recognises the distinctiveness of the people that live, work in, or visit the area. The Plan aims to conserve Stow's beautiful, attractive environment and heritage whilst providing jobs, accessibility and activities for all'.
- 6.3 The vision has three goals:
- **Goal 1: Maintain Stow as a premier shopping and tourist destination;**
 - **Goal 2: Ensure that Stow has appropriate community facilities and other services;**
 - **Goal 3: Ensure that Stow is an attractive place to live and work.**
- 6.4 The new Coalition Government has decided to:
- Abolish the Regional Spatial Strategy and to review and consider the case for abolishing the Regional Government Offices;
 - Return housing and planning powers to local authorities and, in the longer term give neighbourhoods far more ability to determine the shape of the places where their inhabitants live;
 - Promote shared ownership of houses and establish new trusts that will make it simpler for communities to provide homes for local people
- 6.5 We await the development of these proposals and the clarification of the Coalition's aims that will follow the passage of the Localism Bill. But perforce for the present we have considered our goals in the light of the former Governments Regional Planning Guidance for the South West which provides the strategic framework for development plans within the Region and whose vision is:
"To develop the region in a sustainable way, as a national and European region of quality and diversity, where the quality of life for residents, the business community and visitors will be maintained and enhanced."
- 6.6 Within the Regional Planning Guidance Vision are underlying aims expressing, at the regional level, the four objectives for sustainable development set out by Government.
- **Protection of the environment** - the effective safeguarding and enhancement of the region's environmental resources, both natural and built, including those which are crucial to maintaining its overall attractiveness as an area in which to live, work and play;
 - **Prosperity for communities and the regional and national economy** - improving the competitive position of the South West within the EU and internationally to increase sustainable prosperity for all its residents and businesses;
 - **Progress in meeting society's needs and aspirations** - recognising people's requirements for good and improving standards of housing and accessibility to facilities, reducing inequalities, and improving social inclusiveness throughout the region;
 - **Prudence in the use and management of resources** - reducing the consumption of irreplaceable natural resources and making best use of past investment including buildings and infrastructure.

7 Key projects and actions

7.1 The three goals in the Plan's Vision for Stow are:

- **Goal 1:** Maintain Stow as a premier shopping and tourist destination
- **Goal 2:** Ensure that Stow has appropriate community facilities and other services
- **Goal 3:** Ensure that Stow is an attractive place to live and work

7.2 The projects and actions that have been identified to achieve these goals are set out below.

Goal 1: Maintain Stow as a premier shopping and tourist destination

7.3 The Stow Plan proposes to maintain the Town's success as a premier visitor destination by ensuring that it is developed, marketed and promoted in a way that will help secure a sustainable long-term future for the tourist industry which is in sympathy with the Town's physical and natural environment and the aspirations of local residents, and to support business sectors within the community so that they prosper and expand.

Project 1: Maintaining Stow's high quality historic environment

7.4 Ensure that the Town's environment is preserved, maintained and improved, and that any development is managed sensitively and complies with policies governing the protection of the Historic Environment.

Action proposed

7.5 Stow Town Council will:

- **Work with Cotswold District Council to ensure that any relevant Cotswold District Council planning proposals fit within Stow Council's own plans for the Town;**
- **Support Cotswold District Council planning policies that seek to maintain and conserve the high quality of the Town's historic environment and heritage;**

Project 2: Maintain and enhance Stow's tourist, shopping and service offer.

7.6 It is important to sustain quality independent shops which act as a magnet for residents and

visitors to shop, work and play in the Town.

Actions proposed

7.7 Stow Town Council will:

- **Support local independent shops by maintaining the high quality of Stow's environment and improving parking and traffic circulation;**
- **Investigate the possibility of promoting an annual Stow Festival, and Food and Wine Festival.**

Project 3: Improve the environment of the approaches to the Town centre and the High Street

7.8 The approaches to Stow from Moreton in Marsh and from Oddington Road could be enhanced by the planting of trees along the verges. Sheep Street could also be improved by reinstating medium sized native species of trees to complement those that exist.

7.9 The High Street is one of the main approaches to the Square for visitors and for shoppers at Tesco, but it is bleak and unwelcoming. Traffic entering the town tends to accelerate along it and can be travelling at 30mph or more when entering the Square.

7.10 The environment of the Town Centre is generally attractive and well maintained. However, there are areas which might benefit from improvement:

- There is a narrow section of the High Street by the Manor House which has no provision for pedestrians on the east (Manor House) side. Pedestrians have to cross the traffic flow to the Police Station side to avoid this area. Provision of a pedestrian footpath by the Manor House would create a "pinch point", which would have to be prioritised. (This could give right of way to traffic exiting the Square.) This new pavement would help pedestrian safety and slow down traffic entering the Square;
- Upgrading the environment by the planting of trees and flowers would make this area more attractive;
- The introduction of a traffic calming measure at the northern entrance to the High Street, similar to the Church Street scheme, to indicate to

drivers that they are already entering a semi-pedestrianised area;

- The creation of additional parking bays, separated by 'nibs' containing trees, could help to slow traffic further and could have the further benefit of protecting the exit from Parsons Corner, particularly for northbound traffic turning right.

Actions proposed

7.11 Stow Town Council will:

- ***Seek Cotswold District Council and Gloucestershire County Council's assistance with the preparation, funding and implementation of a street improvement and traffic management proposal for the High Street which will be the subject of further community consultation.***

Project 4: Improve the environment of the Square

7.12 For many people, the appearance of the Square is spoiled by the numerous cars parked there. Although it would be impractical to ban parking in the Square altogether, pedestrians should still have full use of the pavements, some of which are very narrow, and, where cars are parked at right angles to the roadside, they often overhang the footpath causing an obstruction.

7.13 It would be desirable to remove parking from most pavement edges, except along by Stocks Green and the High Street where it does not affect pedestrians. This could enable the pavements to be widened to allow pedestrians to walk two abreast even when passing others, and could permit tables to be placed outside restaurants, tea shops etc adding to the attractiveness of the Square in summer. This proposal would involve the removal of a number of the existing parking spaces, and would therefore depend on the creation of alternative off-street parking facilities to serve the Square.

Actions proposed

7.14 Stow Town Council will:

- ***Seek Cotswold District Council and Gloucestershire County Council's assistance with the preparation, funding and implementation of a street improvement scheme for the Square which will be the subject of further community consultation.***

- ***Carry out a survey of the condition of the Town's roads and footpaths and bring to the County Council's attention those areas which require attention.***

Project 5: Improve Stow's traffic management and parking arrangements

7.15 A long-term solution is required to the problems of traffic movements, traffic management, and parking, that best meets the diverse needs of businesses, residents and visitors. The compact nature of Stow and the high volume of pedestrians in the Town Centre suggest that a 20mph speed limit might be justified. Placing average speed control cameras on all the approaches to Stow would cover almost the whole town. Government is reviewing the use of these cameras but has not yet approved their use to monitor 20mph zones. In the absence of such approval, a smaller, conventionally signed zone might be the best solution. A 20mph zone in central Stow could also improve pedestrian safety. Following discussions with Gloucestershire County Council and Cotswold District Council, initiated by Stow Town Council, proposals are being developed to place 'Restricted Parking Zone' signs at the entrances and exits to and from the Square. This could help to reduce the need for additional signage in these architecturally sensitive areas.

7.16 A ban on coaches and HGVs using Digbeth Street, and encouraging coaches to use designated parking bays rather than staying in the Square while their passengers visit the town, would improve pedestrian safety and improve the environment of the Town centre, as would restricting delivery and refuse collection times. An additional coach drop off point in Sheep Street could reduce coach congestion in the Square and reduce the attraction of the Shrubbery as an informal pick up point. Provision should also be made for additional coach parking at the Mangersbury car park.

7.17 Traffic Consultants developing proposals for Cotswold District Council's 'Draft Parking Strategy 2010-2015' suggest that improved enforcement of current controls could improve parking turnover in the Square and suggest that Cotswold District Council should consider the introduction of modest parking charges to further improve parking turnover and compliance. Stow Town Council meanwhile continue to resist the imposition of parking charges in The Square.

- 7.18 To avoid creating further pressure on residential streets, the enforcement of parking restrictions in the town centre should be complemented by additional off street parking. Land immediately north of Tesco should be considered as a location for this purpose. Expansion of the Mangersbury car park should also be considered.
- 7.19 Any charging regime for these additional off street parking locations should recognise the need for affordable all day parking for those who work in Stow – possibly through a low cost season ticket regime.
- 7.20 Residents expressed concern about the poor condition of some of the Town's footpaths. Residents and businesses require safe, well maintained roads and footpaths in and between residential and commercial areas

Actions proposed

- 7.21 Stow Town Council will:
- *Seek to work with GCC Highways and Cotswold District Council's consultants to develop an overall parking strategy and footpath improvement scheme for Stow which, among other things, considers a revised parking regime for the Town Centre, additional car and coach parking provision outside the Town centre.*

Project 6: Restore the town Well

- 7.22 The Well is promoted as one of Stow's "tourist attractions" but at present is in a very sorry state. The Well is fronted by a passing area of asphalt on which cars are frequently parked, obscuring visitors' view of the Well. The area behind the Well is heavily shaded by trees and devoid of vegetation for most of the year.
- 7.23 The Well should be restored and the existing hard standing should be reinstated as a grass verge with some form of bollards put in place to prevent parking. Shade tolerant shrubs, together with spring flowers or bulbs, such as bluebells, which thrive in a woodland environment should be planted in the area behind the Wells. A new passing area should be created on the verge opposite the Well.

Actions proposed

- 7.24 Stow Town Council will:

- *Seek public and/ or private financial or pro bono contributions to prepare and implement a scheme to restore the Well.*

Project 7: Improve public transport

- 7.25 At present most journeys to and from the Town have to be made by private transport as bus services are restricted and the nearest railway stations are at least 4 miles away. The Town requires safe and reliable modes of transport so that residents of all ages and incomes can access local jobs, schools and leisure facilities. Frequent, reliable services and access to transport interchanges are required for travel outside the Town.

Actions proposed

- 7.26 Stow Town Council will:
- *Discuss with the local public transport providers, the improvement of the existing public transport services.*

Goal 2: Ensure that Stow has appropriate community facilities and other services

- 7.27 Stow should be an area where cultural, sport and leisure facilities are available to all members of the community. However, the Town lacks adequate sports and community facilities and would benefit from having a larger venue in which to hold concerts and indoor sports as the smaller rooms used at the moment are unsuitable.
- 7.28 There is a leisure centre three miles from Stow at Bourton-on-the Water and there are facilities available at the Fire Service College at Moreton in Marsh also three miles away. However, public transport to these venues is difficult, especially for youngsters, and is totally absent in the evenings.

Project 8: Multi-sports activity centre/ leisure centre / community centre

- 7.29 In order to provide sports and community facilities to accommodate all ages and abilities, the existing cricket ground, which is owned by the Town Council, the King George V playing fields, or other appropriate land could be redeveloped to provide a new multi-sport activity centre and community centre accommodating sports activities such as bowling, tennis, track cycling, youth shelter, and skateboard park. The availability of local facilities

would promote community cohesion, and be a focus for youth activities in the context of sports and recreation and provide leisure opportunities for the wider community. It could also provide additional parking for both residents and visitors. If it were to be carefully designed the development would have a minimum impact on the area of outstanding natural beauty.

- 7.30 While it is acknowledged that this is a long term project which might stretch over a number of years, if it is to be achieved it is important that work begins on it now.

Actions Proposed

- 7.31 Stow Town Council will:
- ***Review the lease of cricket ground to extend its sports and recreational uses;***
 - ***Seek funds to work with Cotswold District to undertake a feasibility study into the development and funding of a new community and sports facility in Stow.***

Project 9: Rural Cinema

- 7.32 Stow is 25 miles from the nearest purpose built cinema, so a night at the movies can be a major and costly expedition. Many Cotswold communities are already members of Cotswold District Council's Rural Cinema scheme and some residents of Stow support showings at Broadwell and other local venues. The scheme enables members to provide a monthly screening of new releases, recommendations from distributors and requests from venues. The costs are modest. Stow would benefit from participation in this scheme.
- 7.33 The Stow Youth Club is willing to provide a venue for a monthly showing and is seeking volunteers to run those showings. It is also prepared to seek the appropriate licenses. The Club has good kitchen facilities and would provide tea, coffee and biscuits for those who wished to make a Stow night at the movies an opportunity to meet friends. If this venture goes ahead, the Youth Club will also consider offering Saturday morning showings of popular children's films for local young people.

Actions Proposed

- 7.34 Stow Town Council will:
- ***Work with the Youth Club to investigate the feasibility of setting up a Rural Cinema scheme***

in the Youth Club premises.

Project 10: New Library

- 7.35 The location of the existing library is not well suited to a modern library service. A new library would provide a platform for the full range of modern library facilities and relocating the existing Library would also free St Edwards Hall for other community uses such as a Town Museum.

Action proposed

- 7.36 Stow Town Council will:
- ***Seek to work with Gloucestershire County Council to investigate the feasibility of developing a new public library for Stow.***

Project 11: Town Museum

- 7.37 Stow lacks a proper venue in which to showcase the Town's history and heritage, including its importance as a centre for the wool trade and the site of the Battle of Stow during the Civil War. The museum would inform residents, particularly the young, of Stow's past and would be an attraction to tourists. If the existing Library were relocated St Edwards Hall might provide a good venue at relatively low cost

Actions Proposed

- 7.38 Stow Town Council will:
- ***Seek to work with Cotswold District Council's Museum Service to investigate the feasibility of developing a Town Museum in Stow.***

Project 12: New Medical Centre

- 7.39 The existing doctors' surgery is located in an old building and its site severely limits possibility for updating and expansion. A new Medical Centre would provide better primary healthcare facilities. Ideally it should be co-located with proposed Community Centre and new Library.
- 7.40 We understand that the Medical Practitioners in Stow, NHS Gloucestershire and Gloucestershire County Council acknowledge there is a need to modernise and relocate the existing medical practice to enable a wider range of services to be provided. Gloucestershire County Council are working with NHS Gloucestershire and the GPs to develop proposals. This exercise is at an early

scoping stage with the surgery requirements for a new medical facility being considered as part of a master plan for the Ashton House site. Because they are at an early stage, no representations have yet been made to either Stow Town Council nor have any plans been put to Cotswold District Council, the planning authority.

Actions Proposed

7.41 Stow Town Council will:

- ***Seek to work with Gloucestershire County Council, NHS Gloucestershire and local medical practitioners in developing a new Health Centre in Stow.***

Project 13: Provide high speed broadband to businesses and residents

7.42 Broadband speeds from existing providers in Stow are low. Providing genuinely high speed (20 Mbps>) would be of benefit to Stow businesses and residents allowing fast, reliable internet access, enabling transmission/receipt of large data files and speedy downloading of film and video.

Actions Proposed

7.43 Stow Town Council will:

- ***Champion proposals to unbundle Stow Telephone Exchange to provide high speed broadband for Stow businesses and residents***

Goal 3: Ensure that Stow is an attractive place to live and work

Project 14: Affordable Housing

7.44 Although it is difficult to quantify precisely the numbers of houses required for a community as small as Stow, any new development should comprise a mix of houses for rent and houses for shared ownership. As well as meeting the needs of people with strong local links provision of such housing could make it easier to attract and retain key workers. The size and location of such a development should be negotiated with Cotswold District Council and Fosseway Housing Association.

7.45 One option that should be considered is to relocate some or all of the Town Council allotments and to

develop the site released. The allotments belong to Stow Town Council and, in order to use of that site, the Council would be legally required to provide an alternative site for displaced allotment holders.

7.46 Consideration might also be given to providing a limited number of small plots for self building of small ecologically sound houses by local people and the provision of live/work units..

7.47 Concern has also been expressed about the repairs required to some of the existing housing association properties in the Town.

Actions Proposed

7.48 Stow Town Council will:

- ***Work with Cotswold District Council and Fosseway Housing Association to examine the feasibility of developing new, affordable housing in the Town;***
- ***Work with Fosseway Housing Association to examine the question of repair and maintenance of the existing Housing Association housing stock in the Town.***

Project 15: Develop site outside the town centre for small local workshops and light industrial space

7.49 At present there is no location in Stow where small service and manufacturing business can set up and operate. If Stow is to have a balanced economy it will be helpful if a site was available for small scale business units. Such a development should include some "live to work" housing units to encourage the retention and development of artisanal skills.

Actions Proposed

7.50 Stow Town Council will:

- ***Work with Cotswold District Council, Gloucestershire First and local property agents and developers to identify whether there is demand for such a development and to examine the feasibility of providing a site in Stow.***

Project 16: Develop a Design Statement for Stow

7.51 There is a clear need for a Design Statement to help protect Stow's historic heart and to ensure that developments elsewhere in the town are sympathetic, in keeping with Stow's historic architectural character and comply with policies

governing the protection of the sensitive environment of Stow and the surrounding landscape.

7.52 Stow Council will:

- ***Work with Stow Civic Society, Cotswold District Council and other interested parties to produce a Design Statement to safeguard the built environment of the town's historic centre and to ensure that future developments harmonise with the local built vernacular.***

Project 17: Survey of Stow Battlefield

7.53 There are plans to carry out a survey of the possible sites of the start of the Battle of Stow. To reawaken and provide an accurate focus for visitors to the site

7.54 Stow Town Council will

- ***Support the proposed survey and consider the case for a permanent exhibition to commemorate the Battle***

Project 18: Picnic Area

7.55 Visitors to Stow who hve young Children frequently ask for an area where their children can play and are usually directed to the two play areas we have recently built. However, at minimal cost, the lower end of the Cricket Field could be developed as a picnic and natural play area. This would provide a pleasant community facility for residents of Stow and provide an area where they and visitors can picnic while enjoying one of the most scenic views in the Cotswolds

7.56 Stow Town Council will:

- ***Develop proposals for a picnic and natural play area at the lower end of the Cricket Field.***

8 Working with other organisations

8.1 In preparing this Plan the Council has sought the views of and/or worked with a number of public and private organizations including

8.2 Local bodies

- Stow Town Council*
- Stow Business Association
- Stow Civic Society
- Stow Badminton Club
- Stow Cricket Club
- Stow Rugby Club
- Stow Surgery
- Friends of Stow Surgery
- St Edwards PCC
- Baptist Church
- Catholic Church
- Methodist Church
- North Cotswolds Rotary
- The Brethren
- Stow Primary School
- Stow Library
- Stow Police
- Stow Fire Station
- Stow Disability Association
- Stow Womens Institute
- Royal British Legion
- Allotment Association
- Trustees of St Edwards Hall
- Homestart North Cotswolds
- WiRE (Women in Rural Enterprise) Network
- District Councillors D Penman and M Phillips

- Cotswold District Council
- Cotswold Conservation Board
- Gloucestershire Rural Community Council
- Bledington Parish Council
- Broadwell Parish Council
- Condicote Parish Council
- Donnington Parish Council
- Icomb Parish Council
- Longborough Council
- Maugersbury Parish Council
- Oddington Parish Council
- Swell Parish Council

Stow residents

- Copies available to public from Library and STC office and website

* At this stage we sought the Town Council's informal views before we (post consultation) submit our Plan asking STC to adopt it.

Outside bodies

- Gloucestershire County Council –Roads and Traffic
- Gloucestershire County Council –Library Service
- Gloucestershire County Council –Environmental Department
- Gloucestershire PTC

How the plan was developed

8.3 Preparation of the Plan followed the steps shown in the diagram on the right.

Step 1: Consult the community/ analyse the Healthcheck and Review existing Plans

8.4 Step 1 Involved carrying out and analyzing two 'Healthchecks' – the Stow-on-the-Wold Town Appraisal and the Stow-on-the-Wold Business Appraisal. At this step it was also important to examine any proposals that Cotswold District Council, Gloucestershire County Council and the PCT had for the Town so that any proposals could be reflected in the Final Plan.

Step 2: Identify the Key Issues and agree the Vision for the Plan

8.5 Having analysed the 'Heathcheck' information, the key issues facing the Town were identified. At this stage it was also important to agree a 'Vision' for the future of Stow so that the actions proposed in the Plan could have a focus and the effects of the actions could be measured.

Step 3: Theme Group activity and partner consultation

8.6 A number of theme groups were set up to investigate the Key issues and to come up with realistic projects that would go some way at least to tackling the issues identified. The partners required to implement these issues were then consulted to establish their views on the proposed projects.

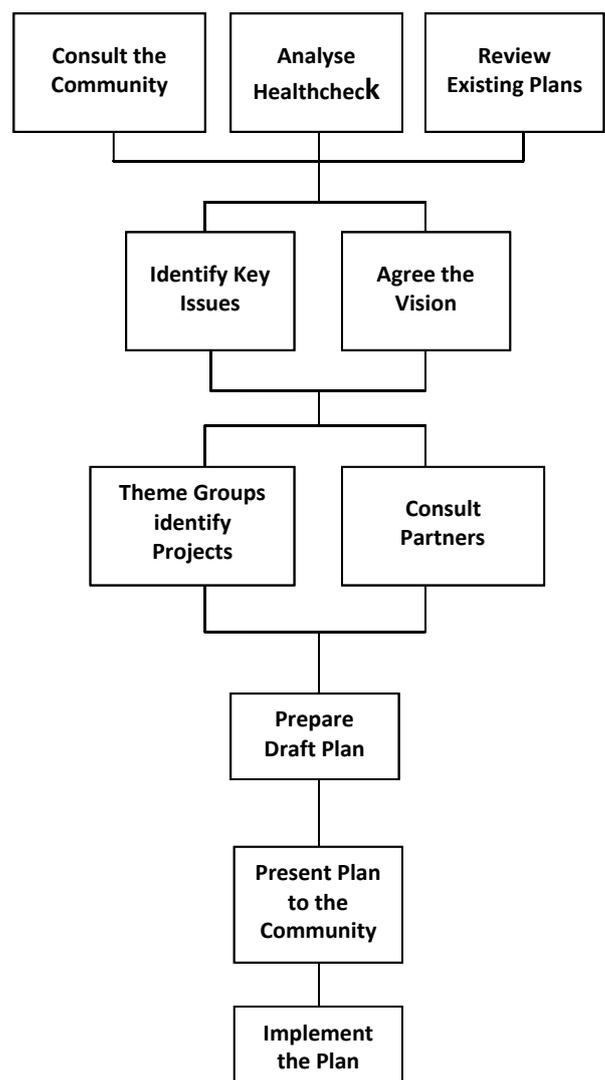
Step 4: Prepare the Final Draft Plan

8.7 Once the comments from the potential partners were received a Final Draft Plan was prepared.

Steps 6 and 7: Present the Plan to the Community for approval and implement the Plan

8.8 Stages 6 and 7 are perhaps the most important parts of the process. They are where the community agrees to put its weight behind the Plan and the projects in the Plan are implemented.

The consultation process



9 Parish Priorities

1. This Section is based on the views expressed in responses from the Parishes of Broadwell, Donnington, Longborough, Mangersbury, Oddington and Swell.
2. Those responses were all positive and the opportunity afforded by the public consultation exercise was much appreciated.
3. There was emphasis on the importance of public and community transport links between Stow and the surrounding villages and the need to maintain and improve them. The need for additional parking and the objectives of improving the environment of the Square and traffic (particularly coach) management were supported
4. There was support for new or improved sports facilities, local cinema, a Health Centre and high speed broadband.
5. The need for a supply of affordable housing for local people and the case for some live and work or workshop/light industrial space were also acknowledged.
6. Individual Parish responses are at Appendix xx

10 How the plan will be delivered

- 10.1 The nature of the projects proposed in the Plan means that, where projects are in the public sector, the relevant public sector body will take the lead. It is also the case that the Town Council will not be in a position to implement many of the projects itself. In these instances the role of the Council will be to provide support and encouragement for the projects, monitor the Plan's implementation, influence future strategy and ensure that the local community's views are made known and that it is kept informed of progress.
- 10.2 There are projects within the plan where the Council will take the lead and for these it will bring together the necessary public and private interests required to make the project happen.
- 10.3 Following the publication of the Plan the Town Council will continue to act as advisors to agencies and other groups implementing the Plan. We will meet quarterly with our partners in the District and County Council to:
- Assess the progress being made in delivering the projects;
 - Evaluate the outputs being achieved and, where necessary set new targets; and
 - Where necessary, review and abandon projects which are unlikely to succeed.
- 10.4 The Plan will be reviewed annually and presented at a public meeting in order to:
- Keep the resident and business community informed of the progress of the plan;
 - Engage the community in any decisions on the future direction of the plan;
 - Introduce new ideas and new people to the working group.

11 How to contact us

- 11.1 The Stow on the Wold Town Plan Group involved in preparing this Plan comprises
- Alun White – Stow Town Council and Stow Youth Club
 - Keith Cox – Stow Town Council
 - Tim Norris – Stow Civic Society
 - Joyce Norris
 - Chris Turner – Stow Town Council and Stow Business association
- 11.2 We can be contacted through Stow Town Council on 01451 832585 or by email at info@stowonthewold.net
- 11.3 We would like to take this opportunity to express our thanks for the contribution the late Tony Jones made to our work.

12 Our thanks

- 12.1 We would like to thank the following people and organisations who helped in the preparation of the Plan:
- Cotswold District Council
 - Gloucestershire County Council
 - Gloucestershire First
 - Gloucestershire Market Towns Forum
 - Gloucestershire Rural Community Council
 - And all those other organisations and individuals who gave us their informal or formal responses. Copies of these can be seen at Stow Town Council's office.

13 Projects: Contribution to Goals

Project	Key Issue		
	Goal 1: Maintain Stow as a premier shopping and tourist destination	Goal 2: Ensure that Stow has appropriate community facilities and other services	Goal 3: Ensure that Stow is an attractive place to live and work
Project 1: Maintaining Stow’s high quality historic environment	√		√
Project: 2 Maintain and enhance Stow’s tourist and shopping and service offer.	√		
Project 3: Improve the environment of the approaches to the Town centre and the High Street	√	√	√
Project 4: Improve the environment of the Square	√	√	√
Project 5: Improve Stow’s traffic management and parking arrangements	√	√	√
Project 6: Restore the town Well			√
Project 7: Improve public transport		√	√
Project 8: Develop a Multi-sports activity centre/ leisure centre / community centre		√	√
Project 9: Set up a Rural Cinema facility in Stow		√	
Project 10: Develop a New Library in Stow		√	
Project 11: Develop a Town Museum in Stow	√		
Project 12: Develop a New Medical Centre in Stow		√	√
Project 13: Provide high speed broadband to businesses and residents		√	√
Project 14: Provide additional Affordable Housing in Stow			√
Project 15: Develop site outside the Town centre for small local workshops and light industrial space		√	√
Project 16: Develop a Design Statement for Stow	√		√
Project 17: Survey of Stow Battlefield	√	√	
Project 18: Picnic Area	√	√	√

14 Actions, costs and timescales

Project Actions	Delivered by	Cost to STC	When
Project 1: Maintaining Stow's high quality historic environment			
• <i>Work with Cotswold District Council to ensure that any relevant Cotswold District Council planning proposals fit within Stow Council's own plans for the Town;</i>	STC/ CDC	Nil	Now
• <i>Support Cotswold District Council planning policies that seek to maintain and conserve the high quality of the Town's historic environment and heritage.</i>	STC/ CDC	Nil	Now
Project: 2 Maintain and enhance Stow's tourist and shopping and service offer.			
• <i>Support local independent shops by maintaining the high quality of Stow's environment and improving parking and traffic circulation;</i>	STC/ Private Sector	TBA	Now
• <i>Investigate the possibility of promoting an annual Stow Festival, and Food and Wine Festival.</i>	STC// Stow Business Association	Modest	Soon
Project 3: Improve the environment of the approaches to the Town centre and the High Street			
• <i>Seek Cotswold District Council and Gloucestershire County Council's assistance with the preparation and implementation of a street improvement and traffic management proposal for the High Street which will be the subject of further community consultation.</i>	STC/GCC	Modest	Now
Project 4: Improve the environment of the Square			
• <i>Seek Cotswold District Council and Gloucestershire County Council's assistance with the preparation and implementation of a street improvement scheme for the Square which will be the subject of further community consultation.</i>	STC/CDC/ GCC	Modest	Now
• <i>Carry out a survey of the condition of the Town's roads and footpaths and bring to the County Council's attention those areas which require treatment.</i>	STC	Nil	Now
Project 5: Improve Stow's traffic management and parking arrangements			
• <i>Seek to work with Cotswold District Council's consultants to develop an overall parking strategy for Stow which, among other things, considers a revised parking regime for the Town Centre, additional car and coach parking provision outside the Town centre and seasonal park and ride facilities.</i>	STC/CDC/GCC	Modest	Now
Project 6: Restore the Town Well			
• <i>Seek public and/ or private financial or pro bono contributions to a scheme to restore the well</i>	STC/ Private Sector	£5-10k	Now
Project 7: Improve public transport			
• <i>Discuss with the local public transport providers the improvement of the existing public transport services;</i>	STC/ Service Providers	Modest	Now
Project 9: Multi-sports activity centre/ leisure centre / community centre			
• <i>Review lease of cricket field to extend its sports and recreational uses;</i>	STC		Soon
• <i>Seek funds to work with Cotswold District to undertake a feasibility study into the development and funding of a new community and sports facility in Stow.</i>	STC/ CDC	£500-750k	Soon
Project 9: Rural Cinema			
• <i>Work with the Youth Club to investigate the feasibility of setting up a Rural Cinema scheme in the Youth Club premises.</i>	STC/ CDC/ Youth Club	Nil	Now

Project Actions	Delivered by	Cost to STC	When
Project 10: New Library			
• <i>Seek to work with Gloucestershire County Council to investigate the feasibility of developing a new public library for Stow.</i>	STC/ GCC	TBA	Later
Project 11: Town Museum			
• <i>Seek to work with Cotswold District Council's Museum Service to investigate the feasibility of developing a new Town Museum in Stow</i>	STC/ CDC	TBA	Later
Project 12: New Medical Centre			
• <i>Seek to work with Gloucestershire Primary Care Trust and local medical practitioners to investigate the feasibility of developing a new Health Centre in Stow.</i>	STC/ PCT	TBA	Later
Project 13: Provide high speed broadband to businesses and residents			
• <i>Work with Stow Business Association to unbundle Stow Telephone Exchange to provide high speed broadband for Stow businesses and residents</i>	STC/ local businesses	c£50k	Now
Project 14: Affordable Housing			
• <i>Work with Cotswold District Council and Fosseway Housing Association to examine the feasibility of developing new, affordable housing in the Town;</i>	STC/ CDC/ Fosseway Housing Association	TBA	Soon
• <i>Work with Fosseway Housing Association to examine the question of repair and maintenance of the existing Housing Association housing stock in the Town.</i>	STC/ CDC/ Fosseway Housing Association	Nil	Soon
Project 15: Develop site outside the town centre for small local workshops and light industrial space			
• <i>Work with Cotswold District Council, Gloucestershire First and local property agents and developers to identify whether there is demand for such a development and to examine the feasibility of providing a site in Stow.</i>	STC/ CDC/ Gloucestershire First/ Private Sector	Nil	Later
Project 16: Develop a Design Statement for Stow			
• <i>Work with Stow Civic Society, Cotswold District Council and other interested parties to produce a Design Statement to safeguard the built environment of the town's historic centre and to ensure that future developments harmonise with the local built vernacular.</i>	STC/ Civic Society	Nil	Now
Project 17: Survey of Stow Battlefield			
• <i>Support the proposed survey and consider the case for a permanent exhibition to commemorate the Battle</i>	STC	TBA	Later
Project 18: Picnic area			
• <i>Develop proposals for a picnic and natural play area</i>	STC	TBA	Soon

Now – in the next twelve months

Sooner – within two years

Later – within five years

15 Appendices

15.1 The appendices are contained in a CD at the rear of this report.

They comprise:

- Stow-on-the-Wold Town Appraisal 2002
- Stow 2020 Business Appraisal 2003
- Stow-on-the-Wold Town Housing Needs Survey 2010
- Community Plan Project Proformas
- Map of Listed Buildings in Stow-on-the-Wold, produced by Cotswold District Council/Ordnance Survey
- List of Listed Buildings in Stow-on-the-Wold
- Exhibition Questionnaire Responses